

Swansea Scrutiny – Improvement Action Plan

Part A - Response to Wales Audit Office Report Proposals for Improvement – Overview & Scrutiny: Fit for the Future?

Improvement Issue:			
P1 - The Council should consider the skills and training that scrutiny members may need to better prepare them for current and future challenges, and develop and deliver an appropriate training and development programme, including providing additional training on the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
P1a – Annual Survey of Scrutiny Councillors and Officers to help identify training and development needs that will help scrutiny members in their role.	April 2019	Scrutiny Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Induction carried out June 2017 included focus on effective questioning. • Previous survey findings indicated that majority of councillors have no specific needs but would like to receive information on any future opportunities.
P1b - Training and Development Programme to be developed and agreed taking into account survey findings and other relevant considerations (including financial implications).	July 2019	Scrutiny Team Leader / Scrutiny Programme Committee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas previously identified: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chairing Skills - Questioning Skills - Public Participation - Ad-hoc briefings to improve knowledge of Council services / working - Refresher session(s) on Scrutiny Process

P1c – Training and Development Programme to be delivered.	During 2019-2020 municipal year	Scrutiny Team Leader / Relevant Training Providers	
P1d – Report back on training and development activities and evaluation	July 2020	Scrutiny Team Leader	
Improvement Issue: P2 - The Council should strengthen its evaluation of the impact and outcomes of its scrutiny activity.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
P2a – Existing performance indicators and measureable outcomes to be identified, where possible, regarding topics for scrutiny inquiry, which could help evidence change / difference following scrutiny.	Ongoing	Performance Manager / Scrutiny Officers / Scrutiny Inquiry Panels	
P2b – Follow up on Scrutiny Working Group recommendations to be formally monitored by Scrutiny Programme Committee to assess impact / outcomes.	Ongoing	Scrutiny Team Leader / Scrutiny Programme Committee	
P2c – Develop mechanisms for feedback from Cabinet Members, Officers, and other stakeholders about impact e.g. post-meeting evaluation; via Annual Survey etc.	May 2019	Scrutiny Team Leader	
P2d – Scrutiny Annual Report to include more reflection about activity and impact / outcomes.	Ongoing	Scrutiny Team Leader	Report for 2017-18 now includes distinct section on impact.

Improvement Issue: P3 - The Council should further clarify the distinction between scrutiny and Policy Development Committee activity in relation to policy development.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
P3a –The Chair of Scrutiny Programme Committee and Scrutiny Performance Panel Conveners be added to the electronic distribution of Policy Development Committee agendas to ensure awareness of their work and work plans.	Jan 2019	Scrutiny Team Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Terms of Reference of the PDCs were revised by Council (Nov 2017) to clarify role and reinforce the distinction from scrutiny. • Policy Development Committee Work Plans for 2018-19 were reported to Scrutiny Programme Committee in August to compare with agreed Scrutiny Work Programme.
P3b – Develop opportunities for Scrutiny Programme Committee Chair and Policy Development Committee Chairs to discuss any issues to avoid overlap / duplication between their roles	Ongoing	Scrutiny Team Leader	

Part B – Scrutiny Programme Committee Improvement Objectives

Improvement Issue: 1 - We need more of our work to be reported to Cabinet so that there is more formal consideration of scrutiny conclusions and recommendations.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
1a - Scrutiny Working Groups have the option to report to Cabinet, depending on findings, instead of by letter to Cabinet Member.	Ongoing	Scrutiny Officers	
1b - Scrutiny Performance Panels have the option to report at least annually to Cabinet reflecting any major concerns / recommendations that the Panel(s) feel need to be made to Cabinet as a result of their monitoring activities.	Ongoing	Scrutiny Officers	
1c - Cabinet to respond to any such reports in the same fashion as Scrutiny Inquiries with a written response by relevant Cabinet Member presented to a Cabinet meeting within 2 months of receipt of report.	Ongoing	Relevant Cabinet Members	
Improvement Issue 2 - We need to be involved at an earlier stage in proposed Cabinet decisions so that our input can be more meaningful.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
2a – Scrutiny Programme Committee to ask Cabinet Members at future Q & A sessions about future key decisions so they can identify any issues which they may want to discuss at an earlier stage than cabinet reporting.	Ongoing	Scrutiny Team Leader	Cabinet Members already advised to consider what they hope to achieve over the coming months and challenges, including any key

			decisions they plan take to Cabinet over the next year, to help them prepare for Q & A sessions.
2b - Cabinet Members to consider reporting to scrutiny / consulting on significant issues and planned decisions at an early stage to enable views of scrutiny to taken e.g. Commissioning Reviews	Ongoing	Cabinet / CMT	
Improvement Issue 3 - We need to increase opportunities for participation so that more councillors can get involved in the work of scrutiny.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
3a - Time of meetings of Performance Panels (and any other recurring activities) to be reviewed at the start of each municipal year.	Ongoing	Scrutiny Officers	
3b - Councillors not actively engaged in scrutiny to be surveyed, to find out whether there are any barriers to participation, and reported to Scrutiny Programme Committee for discussion.	May 2019	Scrutiny Team Leader	80% of backbench councillors were actively involved in scrutiny during 2017-18.
Improvement Issue 4 - We need to strengthen follow up of all scrutiny recommendations so that the response and difference made can be assessed.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
Links to WAO P2 above. Additional actions: 4a – Scrutiny Working Group Conveners encouraged to follow up directly with Cabinet Members, if required, and	Ongoing	Scrutiny Councillors	

report back any concerns to the Scrutiny Programme Committee.			
4b - Questions to Cabinet Members at Scrutiny Programme Committee to cover any outstanding actions in respect of any scrutiny recommendations.	Ongoing	Scrutiny Programme Committee / Scrutiny Team Leader	To prepare for Cabinet Member Q & A Sessions Scrutiny Programme Committee is provided with a summary of scrutiny activities (Committee / Panels / Working Groups) that the Cabinet Member has been involved in to aid follow up.
Improvement Issue: 5 - We need more coverage in the media so that people are more aware of our work.			
Proposed Action	By When	By Whom	Action Already Taken / Progress
5a - Explore with Council's Communications Team ways in which regular media coverage for scrutiny can be generated.	May 2019	Comms. Team / Scrutiny Team	Already good joint working on preparation of press releases in relation to specific scrutiny activities.
5b – Greater use of social media including Swansea Scrutiny blog, Twitter, and developing a Facebook page e.g. promoting role, activities, impact of scrutiny and the ability for people to make requests for scrutiny to be promoted.	Ongoing	Scrutiny Team	